UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/2051
2 January 1996

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General says he is continuing efforts to persuade Iraq to accept Security Council resolutions that would lead to partial lifting of sanctions on oil sales.

- Political will exists between Yemen and Eritrea to solve their political dispute over Red Sea Islands, according to Secretary-General.

- Secretary-General expresses regret at United Nations financial situation.

- Five new non-permanent members join Security Council.

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Some of the most pressing problems facing the United Nations were discussed by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Egyptian President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak in Cairo today. Later, the Secretary-General told reporters he had also informed President Mubarak of his efforts to persuade Iraq to accept Security Council resolution 986 which would allow a limited amount of oil to be sold in return for food and medical supplies. A percentage of those oil revenues would replenish the United Nations Compensation Committee Fund in Geneva and help the thousands of workers, including Egyptians, who had suffered as a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The Secretary-General said they had also reviewed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the division of labor between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Implementation Force (IFOR) and the United Nations. The NATO force would implement the military aspects of the Dayton Agreement, while the UN would be in charge of Sarajevo's reconstruction, monitor and train the civilian police force, care for refugees and defend human rights. He noted that there was also a UN presence in Macedonia.

The Secretary-General said he had briefed President Mubarak on efforts to persuade Libya to implement Security Council resolutions and was hopeful that obstacles to the lifting of sanctions against that country would be

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For information media—not an official record

overcome. They also reviewed a range of African issues, particularly the situations in Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Liberia and Western Sahara and the UN's role in economic and social development worldwide.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has held talks with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki on the dispute between Eritrea and Yemen over the Red Sea islands of Hanish, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General noted that there was political will on both sides to resolve the dispute through peaceful means and reiterated that he was ready o extend his good offices to help the two countries settle their differences. However, he still hoped the dispute would be resolved bilaterally or through regional arrangements.

The Secretary-General arrived in the Eritrean capital of Asmara on Sunday, after a 3-day official visit to Yemen, where he met with President Ali Abdallah Saleh and members of his cabinet.

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The critical financial situation facing the United Nations has still not been resolved, the Secretary-General told reporters in Cairo today. He regretted that Member States currently owed the Organization nearly $3 billion to the regular and peace-keeping budgets.

As of 16 December, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $2.5 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $580 million was for assessments for the regular budget and $1.9 billion was for peace-keeping operations and the International Tribunals.

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Five countries took up their duties yesterday as non-permanent members of the Security Council. Chile, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Poland and the Republic of Korea were elected for two year terms by the General Assembly last month. They join Botswana, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia and Italy -- the other five non-permanent members -- whose terms expire at the end of 1996.

The five permanent members of the Council are China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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3 January 1996

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General warns massive ethnic violence could explode in Burundi; asks Security Council to reconsider proposals for a preventive deployment of military guards and personnel.

* UNHCR food convoys reach northern Burundi for first time in 10 days.

* Secretary-General stresses importance of cooperation between UN and regional organizations; meets with Government officials in Cairo.

* Special Advisor Gharekhan in Western Sahara to assess progress in voter identification.

* Seminar to promote independent and pluralistic Arab media begins next Sunday in Yemen.

* * *

There was a real danger ethnic violence on a massive scale might explode in Burundi, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a letter to the Security Council issued yesterday, the Secretary-General said the deteriorating situation was underscored by the decision of international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the World Food Programme (WFP) and most non-governmental organizations to curtail their activities because of violent attacks against their personnel and assets. He had asked the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata to travel immediately to Bujumbura for urgent discussions on ways to defuse the situation and enable international organizations to function effectively.

The Secretary-General said the Council might reconsider proposals he had made in August 1994, to maintain in Zaire, a military presence capable of intervening rapidly to prevent a repetition of the tragic events in Rwanda. He had also proposed the preventive deployment of miliary personnel and guards to protect humanitarian organization teams. He regretted that the High Commissioner of Human Rights did not yet have the funds to deploy human rights observers, despite repeated requests to potential donor Governments.

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For information media—not an official record

Meanwhile, in Egypt, the Secretary-General was "extremely gratified" by the strong support given by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for his proposals on Burundi, according to a United Nations spokesman.

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A 26-truck convoy from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reached northern Burundi today, where 152,000 refugees and more than 80,000 internally displaced persons have been without food since humanitarian agencies evacuated staff because of security problems. According to a United Nations spokesman, the food deliveries -- the first for 10 days -- provided a very short breathing space. Access for humanitarian supplies must get to those in need, otherwise there was a danger of massive population movements from angry, hungry people, she said.

However, humanitarian aid was only a band-aid for terrible, simmering problems and could never be a substitute for political solutions, the spokesman continued. The Secretary-General had first brought the matter to the Security Council's attention in late 1994 and proposed a standby force in case humanitarian intervention was necessary. The President of Burundi had warned his country was on the brink of total collapse, and the international community should not remain passive witnesses to the deteriorating situation, she said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali underlined the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations when he visited the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo, Egypt today. In his address, he drew attention to next month's meeting in New York between the heads of regional organizations.

The Secretary-General met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Esmat Abdel Meguid, the Chairman of the People's Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee, Mohamed Abdellah and the President of the Shoura Council, Moustafa Kamal Heimi.

This afternoon, he addressed a seminar organized by the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies on the role of the United Nations in the post Cold War era.

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The Special Advisor to the Secretary-General, Chinmaya Gharekhan, is in Western Sahara assessing the situation and progress in the voter identification process. Mr. Gharekhan is expected to go to Rabat for meetings with Moroccan officials before travelling to Tindouf and to La'Youn where the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) is headquartered.

(more)

Mr. Gharekhan is due back in New York next week to report his findings to the Secretary-General. In a report last November, the Secretary-General said the identification of voters had come to a virtual halt and called for a new approach to carry the process forward. MINURSO's mandate is up for renewal at the end of January.

* * *

Some 100 journalists, media managers and information policy makers from the Arab world will participate in a five-day seminar, to promote an independent and pluralistic media in the region. The Seminar, which will begin next Sunday in Sana'a, Yemen, will evaluate the needs of the region's media professionals and consider the principles of freedom of expression and the free flow of information in the context of an Arab society.

The Seminar is being jointly organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in collaboration with the Government of Yemen. It will receive funding from France, the European Commission, the Danish International Development Agency and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations.

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Please note that the last line of the second paragraph in yesterday's Highlights should read:

> He noted that there was also a UN presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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DH/2053
4 January 1996

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General stresses importance of cooperation between UN agencies and regional and non-governmental organizations; meets with Grand Imam in Cairo.

* Committee on Rights of Child to consider 7 country reports at eleventh session in Geneva next week.

* Security Council Sanctions Committees elect officers for 1996.

* * *

In Cairo today, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Gad ul-Haq Ali and reviewed the major issues confronting the United Nations today. The Imam expressed his support for the United Nations, especially for its defence of spiritual values and its role in promoting religious tolerance, according to a United Nations spokesman.

Later, the Secretary-General held consultations with the heads of various United Nations agencies. He underlined the importance of the exchange of information and coordination between UN agencies, as well as the importance of cooperating with "new actors" in the world today such as regional and non-governmental organizations and parliamentary bodies and the private sector.

The Secretary-General also met with United Nations staff who face some concerns because of Organization's financial crisis, the spokesman said. He told them that he was exerting every possible effort to protect their rights. "You are the real capital of the United Nations. Do not underestimate the work you are doing " he said.

* * *

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, which will begin its eleventh session next Sunday in Geneva, will examine the promotion and protection of children's rights in Yemen, Mongolia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, (Serbia and Montenegro), Iceland, Republic of Korea, Croatia and Finland.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

During its three-week session, the Committee will examine the measures adopted by the State parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to advance those rights, particularly through administrative, legislative and judicial means. It is also expected to consider factors which might impede those rights.

The 10-member Committee of independent experts is charged with monitoring the implementation of the Convention, the most complete statement of children's rights ever made and the first to give those rights the force of international law. To date, 182 countries have ratified the Convention.

* * *

The President of the Security Council, John Weston (United Kingdom) convened meetings of its Sanctions Committees, which are composed of all Council members, to elect their respective Bureaus for 1996.

The Council, under various resolutions has sanctions Committees on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, the former Yugoslavia, Libya, Somalia, Angola, Rwanda and Liberia.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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5 January 1996

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council condemns those responsible for daily killings, massacres, tortures and arbitrary detentions in Burundi and demands such actions cease.

* UNHCR Sadako Ogata to arrive in Burundi Sunday for urgent talks on steps to defuse volatile situation there.

* Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burundi recommends reform of country's justice system and creation of rapid national alert system; says both Tutsis and Hutus affected by insecurity, hatred and fear.

* Bosnian International Civilian Police Force has half of 1,712 officers needed; 15 out of 50 countries respond to UN requests for personnel.

* * *

The Security Council today condemned in the strongest terms those responsible for the daily killings, massacres, torture and arbitrary detention in Burundi and said they must cease immediately. In a statement read by its President, Sir John Weston (United Kingdom), the Council encouraged all States to take measures necessary to prevent such persons from travelling abroad and receiving any kind of support. It shared the deep concern of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the situation in the country and called on all concerned in Burundi to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from all acts of violence.

The Council reiterated that all those who committed or authorized the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law were individually responsible and should be held accountable. It stressed the importance of the International Commission of Inquiry. The Council also reiterated its profound concern about radio stations which incited hatred and acts of genocide and encouraged Member States and others to cooperate in their identification and dismantling.

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For information media—not an official record

Expressing grave concern at recent attacks on international humanitarian personnel, the Council said such actions had led to the suspension of essential assistance to refugees and displaced persons and the temporary withdrawal of personnel. It underlined that the Government of Burundi was responsible for the security of international personnel, refugees and displaced persons there and called on it to provide security for food convoys and the humanitarian workers.

The Council welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to ask the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata to discuss with Burundi officials, steps which might be taken to defuse the situation and said it would consider his proposal for a deployment of guards in light of Mrs. Ogata's mission and reports reaching him from the field. It asked him to consider what role UN personnel in the region and other support personnel might play in Burundi.

Stressing the importance of continued attention by the international community as a whole to the situation, the Council encouraged Member States to intensify contacts and visits. It reaffirmed its support for the Convention of Government of 10 September 1994 -- the institutional framework for national reconciliation -- and again called on all parties, military forces and elements of civil society to fully respect and implement it.

* * *

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata is expected in Bujumbura, Burundi on Sunday for urgent talks with high-level Government officials on how to defuse the volatile situation in the country. Mrs. Ogata's visit is in response to a request by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Meanwhile, in northern Burundi, the security problem has improved over the last week last week when there were attacks on humanitarian convoys and personnel. According to a UNHCR spokesman, the agency is now able to send convoys out to the refugee camps and also to nine locations where there are internally displaced persons. However, it is still concerned about the security situation in the country.

* * *

The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights situation in Burundi has recommended that the administration of justice in the country be urgently reformed to combat impunity, possibly through the assistance of magistrates from other African countries. He has also recommended that measures be adopted to combat insecurity in the country, particularly by creating a national rapid alert mechanism. Measures should also be taken to reinforce Burundi's civil society by supporting the efforts of local non-governmental organizations.

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The recommendations are contained in an initial report in which the Special Rapporteur noted that the general climate of insecurity, fear and hatred affected all segments of the population, both Hutus and Tutsis. Ethnic tension was reflected in the Government, in which the number of cases of blockage between the two ethnic groups had increased, resulting in a lack of effectiveness at all levels of State activity, including the administration of justice, the functioning of the army and the police, the economic management of the country and all levels of education.

* * *

It could be a couple of months before the international civilian police force for Bosnia Herzegovina is fully deployed. A United Nations spokesman said today that of 50 countries approached to contribute personnel, only 15 have responded positively and the force now has half of the 1,712 officers needed.

Police serving with the force would normally be rotated out after one year of service, but this time the officers would probably be asked to stay longer, the spokesman said. A new group of civilian police will be sent to Bosnia next month, after five days of training in Zagreb. Currently, there were 110 police officers serving in 15 locations throughout the country, with about 30 of them in Sarajevo.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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9 January 1996

T U E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- Security Council strongly condemns human rights violations in Croatia, urges Government to bring perpetrators to trial promptly.
- Secretary-General meets with Pope John Paul II in Rome; discusses United Nations financial crisis and critical situation in Africa with Italian Government leaders.
- Secretary-General pays tribute to former French President Mitterrand as leader who worked tirelessly for improvement of humanity.
- Secretary-General recommends UNOMIG mandate be extended to 12 July 1996.
- UNICEF expresses "profound concern" over reports of neglect and starvation in China's state orphanages.
- UNHCR airlift to Sarajevo ends after three and a half years.

* * *

The Security Council has strongly condemned international humanitarian law and human rights violations, killings, systematic and widespread looting and arson in Croatia's former sectors North and South. In a statement yesterday, Council President Sir John Weston (United Kingdom) urged the Croatian Government to make every effort to arrest all perpetrators and bring them promptly to trial.

The Council said it was disturbed by the humanitarian and security situation of the mostly elderly Serbs who have remained in the former sectors. It expressed grave concern at reports of extensive harassment and intimidation, looting and other forms of abuse and reaffirmed its demand that the Government take urgent measures to stop such acts immediately.

The Council also reaffirmed its demand that the Croatian Government respect the rights of the local Serb population, including their right to remain, leave or return to their homes in safety and dignity, and urged the Government to refrain from measures which would adversely affect such rights. The Council also reaffirmed its call to the Government to lift any time-limits on the return of

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For information media—not an official record

refugees to reclaim their property and noted that Croatia's decision on 27 December 1995 to suspend the deadline was a step in the right direction.

* * *

In a keynote address to the Italian parliament today, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali spoke of the democratization of States, international society and the transnational community, according to a United Nations spokesman. On the second day of an official visit, the Secretary-General also stressed the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, citing the cases of El Salvador, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Somalia, Haiti and the former Yugoslavia.

Earlier, he met with Prime Minister Lamberto Dini for discussions on reform of the United Nations and its financial crisis, the critical situation in various African countries, United Nations sanctions in Iraq and Libya and the launching of a United Nations staff college in Turin. Earlier, the Secretary-General met with the Italian Defence Minister, General Domenico Corcione, who underlined the importance of the Organization's continued involvement in the former Yugoslavia.

At a meeting yesterday with His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the Secretary-General thanked the Pontiff for his continued moral support of the United Nations and its activities, the spokesman said. He was also the main speaker at an event hosted by the Mayor of Rome, Francesco Rutelli, and Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli, at which he focused on the importance of non-governmental organizations and the civil society. The Secretary-General is expected to leave for London tomorrow, where he will meet with Prime Minister John Major.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali expressed deep sorrow and profound regret at the death yesterday of President Francois Mitterrand. He said the former French leader had worked tirelessly for the improvement of humanity, and his continuing international action, inspired by a humanist and world view, made him an ardent defender of the United Nations cause.

President Mitterrand had firmly committed his country to the protection of human rights, support of the rule of law and humanitarian operations in favour of suffering and vulnerable populations, the Secretary-General said. He sent his condolences to Mrs. Danielle Mitterrand, the French people and President Jacques Chirac.

Yesterday, the Security Council paid tribute to President Mitterrand. Council President Sir John Weston (United Kingdom) said the French leader had played a pivotal role in his country and the world's history. In a political life spanning five decades, he had been influential as a Cabinet Minister, political leader and statesman. He had also been a friend of the United Nations and a strong defender of its principles and objectives.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) be extended until 12 July 1996. In a report issued today, the Secretary-General said that the Security Council should review the extension if a meeting of the Council of the Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on 19 January changed the mandate of the CIS peace-keeping force.

Despite strenuous efforts in recent months by the Russian Federation to draft a protocol, which would be acceptable to both sides to the conflict, there had been little progress, the Secretary-General said. The draft protocol's main objective was to establish a basic understanding of principles on which a more detailed agreement could be elaborated. However, ingredients for a solution were not yet present, and external factors were influencing the extent to which both sides were willing to compromise. They still needed outside assistance to find a lasting solution to their dispute.

The Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Edouard Brunner, and the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister were meeting today to consider ways to move the political process forward, the Secretary-General said. While not expected to lead to an early breakthrough, the meeting was another step in joint efforts by the United Nations and the Russian Federation to restore peace and stability to the region.

* * *

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has expressed profound concern over the findings of a Human Rights Watch report alleging that thousands of children are being allowed to die every year from medical neglect and starvation in China's state-run orphanages with the tacit approval of senior political leaders. According to UNICEF's Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, the agency is seeking clarification from the Chinese Government. "These are grave issues, and such actions would clearly contravene the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which China has ratified", she said.

The report, which was released on Monday, is entitled "Death by Default: A Policy of Fatal Neglect in China's State Orphanages". It suggests that the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which monitors the Convention, place at the top of its agenda for the coming year, conditions in the Chinese child welfare system. The Chinese Government submitted its first implementation report on the Convention to the Committee in 1994, and thus voluntarily submitted itself to international monitoring on the treatment of its children. The UNICEF said it would press strongly for a continuation of this process.

* * *

The final flights of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sarajevo airlift -- history's longest running humanitarian airbridge -- were scheduled to arrive in the Bosnian capital today. According to UNHCR Sadako Ogata, the airlift was a lifeline which saved tens of thousands of people and kept the city alive through three winters of war.

Ms. Ogata said, although the airlift passed many milestones, there was never a cause for celebration. Every day of war, siege and suffering meant another day of flying. She paid tribute to those who had died in the international effort and the thousands of people who had made it a success.

NOTE: The Daily Highlights was not published yesterday as United Nations Headquarters was closed due to severe weather conditions.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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10 January 1996

W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Secretary-General says those who withhold funding from UN then claim it is ineffective are being dishonest.

* Secretary-General holds talks in London with Prime Minister John Major on UN's financial crisis and world's trouble spots.

* UNFPA expresses concern over allegations of abuses and neglect in Chinese orphanages.

* European Union signs financing agreement for deployment of human rights monitors in Burundi.

* WFP airlifts food to 600,000 refugees in Sierra Leone after rebels ambush humanitarian road convoys.

* WHO makes gains towards a polio-free world.

* UNDP and Guyana sign agreement on sustainable human development initiatives.

* * *

There is a certain dishonesty on the part of those who, by denying funding, make the United Nations ineffective, then say they are withholding funding because it is ineffective, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Addressing a meeting in London today, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the first General Assembly session, he said the Organization was being weakened by Member States' apparent inability to follow through on decisions and their failure to provide the means to make their commitments real.

The Secretary-General said greater frankness about the current situation was needed. Despite strong political support for the United Nations, multilateralism and the comprehensive approach outlined in the Charter, the Organization's effectiveness was being corroded from within, because it was being denied the means to do its job properly. The morale of its most precious asset, its staff, was being sapped, he said.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Secretary-General noted that challenges today were not as clear cut as the Nazi aggression and militarism which the world faced fifty years ago. However, some threats such as environmental catastrophes, the dangers of pandemics like AIDS, or international terrorism were global and affected all States. The world had asked the United Nations to handle those problems, without giving it the military, political or financial means. He called for a mobilization against new threats and urged the international community to make genocide and ethnic cleansing as unthinkable as Nazi aggression.

Earlier, at the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the first General Assembly session, the Secretary-General said the United Nations had solved disputes and helped bring peace, development and democracy to every continent. It had successfully overseen, with relatively little bloodshed, the decolonization agenda. The protection of human rights had been immeasurably enhanced through the United Nations, which had also forcefully articulated the struggle against apartheid, the case for the Palestinians and the debate about development.

* * *

The Secretary-General held discussions in London today with British Prime Minister John Major on the world's trouble spots, including Bosnia and Herzegovina and the situations in Eastern Slavonia, Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia and Sierra Leone. According to a United Nations spokesman, they also discussed the financial crisis facing the United Nations and the possibility of convening a special session of the General Assembly to address the Organization's acute monetary problems.

The Secretary-General will leave for Paris tonight to attend ceremonies for the late French President, Francois Mitterrand, who died earlier this week. He will return to London on Saturday to chair talks on East Timor, which are scheduled to begin 16 January.

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The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) says it is deeply concerned about reports in the world media that girl children had been systematically abused and neglected in state orphanages in China. In a statement issued today, Executive Director, Dr. Nafis Sadik, said the UNFPA strongly supported respect for human rights in whatever context they were raised.

The UNFPA was especially concerned with reproductive rights and health, and respect for the autonomy and equality of women and girls, Dr. Sadik said. The reports about girl children were troubling and the charges needed to be substantiated. The UNFPA was asking the Chinese authorities for clarification on the issues raised.

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The European Union has signed a financing agreement to fund the deployment of human rights monitors in Burundi. The agreement, which was signed yesterday, is worth some $518,000 and will fund observers from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for three and a half months. The first contingent of five observers will be deployed in Bujumbura as soon as contributions are

received. Depending on security conditions and funding, up to 35 observers will reinforce the operation, first in the capital and gradually throughout the country.

The High Commissioner's office in Bujumbura, which opened in June 1994, is not funded through the Organization's regular budget. It aims to help prevent and limit human rights violations and inter-ethnic violence. The observers are mandated to bring cases of alleged violence to the attention of authorities, recommend remedial action and follow up on developments. They also have a crucial information and fact-finding role.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has begun airlifting food into war-torn eastern and southern Sierra Leone after rebels ambushed relief convoys. According to WFP field workers, getting food to more than 600,000 displaced people in the region has become a security nightmare since rebel attacks against the convoys escalated dramatically in recent weeks.

The situation has reached crisis proportions with WFP warehouses in the affected areas almost emptied. The Agency fears malnutrition will reach frightening levels and has asked the Government to provide dedicated military convoys to escort humanitarian deliveries. More than one third of Sierra Leone's population of 4 million -- some 1.5 million people -- are displaced and desperate for food. The most needy are women, children and the elderly.

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Nearly half the world's children under 5 years of age, in 51 countries, received supplementary immunization against poliomyelitis last year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Special vaccination campaigns, known as national immunization days, are an important part of the Agency's polio eradication strategy. The disease has already been eliminated in the Americas where the last case was reported in Peru in 1991. The WHO estimates an additional $500 million will be needed to eradicate the disease by the year 2000.

* * *

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Guyanese officials have signed an agreement to work together to design and carry out sustainable human development initiatives. They will prepare a national report which will spell out the country's key development challenges and guide the Government in the follow-up commitments it made at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen last March. In 1995, Guyana ranked 105th out of the 174 countries on the UNDP's human development index.

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UNITED NATIONS

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11 January 1996

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* UN reports world economy expected to grow 3 per cent in 1996; expresses concern at labour conditions in developed countries and says development assistance for poor countries endangered.

* Secretary-General attends ceremony in Paris to commemorate death of former French President Francois Mitterrand.

* Member States owe United Nations nearly $2.3 billion as of 31 December 1995; $564 billion to regular budget and $1.7 billion to peace-keeping.

* U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright says proposed force for Eastern Slavonia could receive IFOR backup and close air support if needed.

* High Commissioner on Human Rights holds emergency meeting on financing of field operations in Rwanda.

* Angolan Government begins quartering forces; UNITA agrees to new timetable to quarter its troops and to stop propaganda broadcasts.

* DPI Assistant Secretary-General tells seminar on Arab media right to information and freedom of expression basic prerequisites for socio-economic development and political freedom.

* Committee on the Rights of the Child begins eleventh session in Geneva; to hear reports from seven countries.

* * *

The world economy will attain a cruising speed of 3 per cent annual growth in 1996, up from 2.6 per cent last year, according to the half-year update of the United Nations "World Economic and Social Survey". World trade grew almost 10 per cent in 1995 for a second year of very rapid growth, with strong demand in developed countries and the Asia/Pacific region. The update was issued today by the Department of Economic and Social Information Policy Analysis (DESIPA).

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Output growth in developed countries slowed last year and is expected to remain at 2.5 per cent as policy makers keep inflation low and focus on budget deficits. Developing economies grew 5 per cent last year and this year's outlook was 5.5 per cent. Central and Eastern Europe did better than expected last year and transition economies were on track for their first year of overall growth in 1996.

However, current labour market conditions in developed countries were an economic and social concern with little growth in real wages. High unemployment was making consumers cautious and holding back economic growth. While inter-governmental financial support prevented the devaluation of the Mexican peso from becoming a world financial crisis, official assistance for poor countries was endangered.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was in Paris today to attend the official ceremony commemorating the death of former French President, Francois Mitterrand at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, a United Nations spokesman said. Later, he went to a lunch hosted by President Jacques Chirac and this evening he will meet with the French foreign minister. The Secretary-General will have a formal meeting with President Chirac, before returning to London to chair the talks on East Timor.

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The United Nations is owed a total of nearly $2.3 billion in assessed contributions as of 31 December 1995, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $564 billion was for assessments for the regular budget and $1.7 billion was for peace-keeping operations. The figure for peacekeeping included assessments totalling $14.6 million within the 30-day due period.

Sweden, the thirteenth largest contributor to the United Nations, was the first Member State to pay its full assessment for the 1996 regular budget, a United Nations spokesman said. Currently, 91 countries were in arrears on their 1995 contributions. Iraq, along with about 20 other countries, came under Article 19 of the Charter and lost voting privileges in the General Assembly last year.

Article 19 states that a Member whose financial contributions are in arrears cannot vote in the Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from the proceeding two years. However, the Assembly can permit Members to vote if they are in arrears for more than two years because of circumstances beyond their control.

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Security Council consultations to create the authority for the transitional administration in Eastern Slavonia and for an initial force of 5,000 troops to implement provisions of the Dayton peace agreement were progressing well, according to United States Ambassador Madeleine Albright. Speaking to correspondents today, she said the force, which would be known as the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baraja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), would replace the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) whose mandate expires 15 January.

Ambassador Albright said there was general agreement in the Council that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) - led Implementation Force (IFOR) should provide close air support and withdrawal capability for UNTAES if necessary. She noted that the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, General Jacques Klein, had reported the force's nature and relationship to IFOR was more important than its strength, and it could number 5,000 if it was credible and well constituted.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso, has held an emergency meeting in Geneva to discuss financial difficulties facing human rights field operations in Rwanda. The operations, funded by voluntary contributions, were established with a $3 million advance from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund in October 1994. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has informed the High Commissioner that $1.5 million must be repaid by end of March. Unless additional funds are generated, field operations in Rwanda could be terminated by the end of January.

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The Angolan Government began quartering personnel from its rapid reaction police at a formal ceremony in the capital of Luanda yesterday, according to a United Nations spokesman. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), has agreed to resume moving its troops into quartering camps under a new timetable.

The quartering of troops, which is expected to be completed in three provinces by 20 January, has encountered many delays and difficulties, the spokesman said. To date, six out of the eight quartering sites needed have been built. Under a new plan, Government troops will be withdrawn to their barracks and UNITA has agreed to end propaganda on its radio broadcasts. Senior UNITA officials will begin arriving in Luanda in the next 24 hours.

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During its fiftieth anniversary year, the United Nations had reaffirmed its commitment to press freedom, pluralism and the dignity of journalists and writers, Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information Samir Sanbar has told a seminar to promote an independent and pluralistic Arab media. The five-day seminar, which will end tomorrow in San'a, Yemen reviewed such issues as public service media, censorship and self-censorship, and strengthening professional training.

Speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sanbar said that the media had contributed to the current decisive period in the economic, social and cultural development of the Arab region. The right to information and freedom of expression were basic prerequisites for socio-economic development and political freedom. Citing the assassination of over 70 journalists last year -- more than 30 in Algeria alone -- he said attacks on media and the killing of journalists could not be tolerated.

* * *

A plan of action to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been sent to the State parties by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala-Lasso. In his opening address to the eleventh session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva this week, Mr. Ayala-Lasso said he envisaged a strategy for developing inter-agency cooperation and with sufficient mobilization, the plan should soon be operational.

The Committee of independent experts will examine seven country reports as well as administrative, legislative and judicial measures by States parties to advance the rights of the child. Mr. Ayala-Lasso said that at its last session, the General Assembly invited States parties to ensure the education of the child in accordance with article 29 of the Convention. It also expressed support for expert studies on children affected by armed conflicts and for the Special Rapporteur's work on the sale of children, child prostitution and pornography.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/2058
12 January 1996

F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council extends UNOMIG mandate till 12 July, subject to review if mandate of CIS peace-keeping force changed; condemns ethnic killings and violence in Abkhazia, Georgia.

* Secretary-General discusses United Nations reform and restructuring with President Chirac in Paris.

* IFOR offers to help International Criminal Tribunal locate evidence of mass graves in Bosnia.

* Bosnian International Civilian Police Force has 1246 out of the 1700 officers needed.

* Director-General of WHO seriously concerned at increased targeting and hostage taking of patients and health personnel during armed conflicts.

* Peter Hansen appointed Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

* * *

The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) for a further six months until 12 July 1996. The extension will be subject to review if the mandate of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping force is changed.

In unanimously adopting resolution 1036 (1996), the Council called on the parties to improve their cooperation with UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force to provide a secure environment for the return of refugees and displaced persons. It also called on them to honour their commitments to the safety and freedom of United Nations and CIS personnel with regard to UNOMIG's inspections of heavy weapons storage sites.

Condemning the ethnic killings and continuing human rights violations in Abkhazia, Georgia, the Council called upon the Abkhaz side to ensure the safety of all persons under its control. It also called on the parties, particularly

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For information media—not an official record

the Abkhaz side, to achieve substantive progress, without further delay, towards a comprehensive political settlement and to cooperate fully with the efforts by the Secretary-General and the Russian Federation.

The Council demanded that the Abkhaz side accelerate significantly the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons by accepting a timetable proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It also demanded that the Abkhaz side guarantee the safety of spontaneous returnees already in the area and regularize their status in accordance with the Quadripartite Agreement of April 1994.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with President Jacques Chirac in Paris today and discussed a wide range of issues, particularly reform and restructuring of the United Nations and its current financial situation, according to a United Nations spokesman. They also discussed the situation in Burundi, Rwanda, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the conflict between Eritrea and Yemen. Yesterday, the Secretary-General met with the French Foreign Minister, Herve de Charrette.

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) led Implementation Force (IFOR) has offered to help the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia locate evidence of mass graves in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a United Nations spokesman said today. Prosecutor Judge Richard Goldstone will meet with NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana in Brussels on 19 January to finalize cooperation on the matter.

To date, the International Criminal Tribunal has been repeatedly denied access by Bosnian Serb authorities to sites around Prijedor and Srebrenica, where mass graves are allegedly located, the spokesman said. However, IFOR's deployment should allow for unrestricted access as provided for in the Dayton peace agreement. The Tribunal welcomed any action to locate and secure evidence of atrocities.

* * *

More personnel have been promised for the international civilian police force for Bosnia and Herzegovina, a United Nations spokesman said today. To date, 1246 out of the 1700 officers needed have been pledged. Already, 153 police are deployed throughout the country, with 62 in the capital, Sarajevo and 10 patrolling the Serbian suburb of Ilidza.

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The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, has expressed serious concern at the recent increase in armed attacks and hostage-taking operations targeting patients and health personnel. In a statement issued yesterday, Dr. Nakajima said a deliberate hostage-taking operation against a hospital was a flagrant violation of international law and human rights, including the rights of the sick to medical help and protection. Attacking hospitals full of suffering people was immoral and no goals could justify such inhumane treatment.

Dr. Nakajima called on warring parties to respect human rights, accord amnesty to patients and health personnel, regardless of their religious, political or social affiliation, and to respect the sanctity of health facilities. He also called on governments, religious leaders, private organizations and individuals to help ensure that hospitals, the sick and health personnel were not targeted.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Peter Hansen as Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) effective 20 January, a spokesman for the Organization said today. Mr. Hansen has been Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs since March 1995. Previously, he was Executive-Director of the Commission on Global Governance and the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations.

The General Assembly established UNRWA in 1949, when there were approximately 700,000 Palestinian refugees. Currently, 3.2 million registered refugees are living in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Agency provides them with education, health, relief and social services. It employs some 20,000 staff, nearly all of them Palestinians, and has a budget of $666 million for 1996-97.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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15 January 1996

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council establishes transitional administration and peace-keeping operation for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium; also authorizes UN military observers to continue monitoring demilitarization of Prevlaka Peninsula for another three months.

* Secretary-General says a continuing pattern of disparity between responsibilities and resources would doom United Nations to repeated failure.

* A total ban on production and export of land-mines only way to deal with their devastating effects, according to Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

* Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women opens fifteenth session; to consider human rights of women in Rwanda and reports of eight countries.

* UNHCR Sadako Ogata to chair meeting to solve the problem of 2 million refugees and displaced persons from former Yugoslavia.

* * *

The Security Council today decided to establish a transitional administration and peace-keeping operation to help with the demilitarization and eventual peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into Croatia. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council decided, by unanimously adopting resolution (1037) 1996, to establish the operation for an initial 12-month period.

The Mission will be known as the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Branja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), as referred to in the Basic Agreement on the region signed last November by the Croatian Government and local Serbs. It will initially deploy 5,000 troops. Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations, may take all necessary measures, including close air support, to defend or help the Mission withdraw.

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The Council also requested that UNTAES and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) led International Implementation Force (IFOR) cooperate with each other. The Secretary-General will appoint a Transitional Administrator who will have overall authority over the Mission.

The Council also decided that the region's demilitarization, as provided for in the Agreement, will be completed 30 days after the Secretary-General informs it of UNTAES' military deployment. It will review whether the parties have shown a willingness to implement the Basic Agreement no later than 14 days after the date demilitarization is due to be completed. The Council will reconsider the Mission's mandate if the Secretary-General reports that the parties have significantly failed to comply with their obligations under the Agreement.

In another action, the Council also authorized United Nations military observers to continue monitoring demilitarization of Prevlaka Peninsula for another three months.

* * *

Mandates given to the United Nations must be clear, realistic and backed by human and material resources, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Speaking at the University of Oxford, today, he said nothing could be more detrimental than to permit a continuing pattern of disparity between responsibilities and resources that would doom the United Nations to repeated failure. He had taken every conceivable step to acquire urgently needed funds and supported a wide variety of financial measures to deal with the UN's cash flow problem. None of those proposals had been adopted.

The Secretary-General said he had carried out stringent budget-cutting measures, including reduction in the number of Secretariat posts, curtailment of travel, support for an inspector general for internal oversight, and consolidation of thirteen offices into three departments. The cuts had succeeded but the scale of possible savings was tiny in relation to the magnitude of the crisis. The financial gymnastics which he had undertaken could not be maintained. He said that as the immediate financial emergency was addressed and system-wide reform pursued, it was time to seriously address the need for a United Nations that could operate on a secure and steady independent financial foundation.

* * *

A total band on the production, export and use of land mines is the only way to deal with their devastation, according to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Peter Hansen. Speaking to correspondents at Headquarters today, he said there had been a great deal of talk about technical fixes, and of the difference between "bad mines" waiting to blow up a citizens and the so-called "good mines" which could self destruct. That was not a solution as so-called smart bombs still caused an enormous danger to civilians many years after fighting had ended.

Mr. Hansen said 69 countries were now littered with land-mines. Estimates of 10,000 people killed a year were probably low, as many victims were unaccountered for. The United Nations land-mine programmes removed 100,000 mines a year, but more than 2 million more were added annually at a cost of $500 a piece to remove. Even if the use of land-mines was stopped today, there would still be great costs involved in treating the hundreds of amputees for many years. He said now that an American, two British and six Swedish soldiers serving with the Implementation Force (IFOR) in the former Yugoslavia had been killed by land-mines, the international community's attention might be concentrated on the issue.

* * *

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women will consider the human rights of women in Rwanda during its three-week session beginning today at United Nations Headquarters. The 23-member Committee of experts is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted in 1979. It will discuss the reports of eight States parties and the results of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which urged universal ratification of the Convention by the year 2000.

Addressing the opening session, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Nitin Desai, told the Committee it could play a key role in linking implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and implementation of the Convention.

Countries which have ratified or acceded to the Convention must submit a national report, initially within one year of signing, and then at least every four years, on measures to ensure women's equal participation in their countries' political, social and cultural life. The Committee has adopted general recommendations covering such issues as women's economic position, the impact of structural adjustment policies, maternity leave, and measures taken to allow women to combine child-bearing with employment and violence against women.

* * *

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, will chair a meeting of the Humanitarian Issues Working Group of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia in Geneva tomorrow. A United Nations spokesman said the one-day meeting would focus on solutions to deal with the more than two million people forced from their homes by the war in the former Yugoslavia.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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16 January 1996

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General chairs seventh round of talks on East Timor attended by Foreign Minsters of Portugal and Indonesia; parties agree to next round of talks in June.

- Secretary-General disturbed at reports of coup d'etat in Sierra Leone; says United Nations remains committed to supporting next month's elections.

- Security Council President expresses concern at continuing cease-fire violations in Angola; urges parties to refrain from military activities and improve climate of trust.

- Obstacles to ridding world of scourge of land-mines should not be underestimated, Secretary-General tells meeting of States parties to Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

- Secretary-General, offering condolences on death of King Moshoeshoe II of Lesotho, says monarch played essential role in search for stability and development in southern Africa.

- United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights calls for conflicting parties in Chechnya to respect human rights and humanitarian law.

- Haiti's President-elect requests UNMIH remain for another six months; social and economic conditions still extremely harsh, with soaring unemployment and little investment.

- Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women discusses ways to follow-up on Beijing Conference; hears report from Cyprus.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in London today, held the seventh round of talks on the question of East Timor, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General met separately with Portuguese Foreign Minister

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Jaime Gama and Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and then chaired a joint expanded meeting with delegations from both sides. He was accompanied by his Special Adviser for Political Affairs, Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi.

The parties focused on developments since the last round of talks in July and on issues related to an eventual framework for a just, lasting, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor. The preservation and promotion of the cultural identity of the East Timorese people and bilateral relations between Indonesia and Portugal were also on the agenda. An eighth round of talks will be held in Geneva on 29 June.

* * *

The Secretary-General is disturbed by reports of a coup d'etat in Sierra Leone today, according to a United Nations spokesman and believed the political future of the country should be determined by free and fair elections. The United Nations remained committed to supporting such elections next month, as already agreed.

The Secretary-General said his good offices also remained available, through his Special Envoy for Sierra Leone, Berhanu Dinka, to facilitate negotiations between the Government of Sierra Leone and the "Revolutionary United Front."

* * *

Security Council President Sir John Weston (United Kingdom) has expressed concern at the continuing cease-fire violations in Angola. In a letter to President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and Dr. Jonas Savimbi, head of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), he urged the sides to refrain from military activities or troop movements and to speed up demining.

Ambassador Weston called on both leaders to convene an urgent meeting, without conditions, to improve the climate of trust and give new impetus to the peace process. A United Nations spokesman said the letter will be hand-delivered by United States Ambassador, Madeleine Albright, who arrives in the Angolan capital of Luanda tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Blondin Beye, has been informed that President dos Santos and Dr. Savimbi have agreed to meet in Libreville, Gabon, on 20 January, the spokesman said. The meeting will also be attended by the three observer countries -- Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States.

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A total ban was the only way to halt the current massive proliferation of land-mines and cope with the nature and magnitude of the problem, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a message to a one-day meeting of States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in Geneva, the Secretary-General said the obstacles which must be overcome before the world was rid of the scourge of land-mines should not be underestimated.

The Secretary-General said there were different perceptions on the legitimacy of land-mines and their role in defence planning. Governments had gained new understanding through the technical discussions at last year's meeting of States parties in Vienna, and he was confident many would address the military, technical and economic sacrifices needed to get rid of land-mines. Recent national measures on the transfer, production or reduction of existing stockpiles of anti-personnel mines had improved the political environment for further progress.

Meanwhile, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, expressed grave disappointment with the outcome of the Vienna meeting. In a statement issued yesterday, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Peter Hansen, said discussions had centered on the military and economic aspects of land-mines and failed to take adequately into account the humanitarian dimensions, particularly their devastating social and economic impact.

Mr. Hansen said an estimated 110 million land-mines around the world had caused an enormous humanitarian crisis, killing more than 800 people a month, maiming thousands and leaving whole countries devastated and unable to resume normal life after armed conflicts ended. The Committee called on General Assembly to urge the international community to increase financial, material and technical support for mine clearance.

* * *

King Moshoeshoe II of Lesotho, who was killed yesterday in a car accident, had played an essential role in the search for stability and development in southern Africa, the Secretary-General said today. In a message to Queen Mamohato, the Secretary-General said he was shocked and profoundly saddened at the death of the King, whose wisdom and ability would long be remembered by the international community.

* * *

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso, has called on the conflicting parties in Chechnya to respect human rights and humanitarian law. In a statement issued yesterday, Mr. Ayala Lasso reminded the

parties of their solemn obligation to abide by the standards of international humanitarian law.

The international community was alarmed by the actions of Chechen fighters who had taken large numbers of civilians, including women and children as hostages, and reports that some had died or been wounded as a result of the violence. The High Commissioner stressed that nothing could justify hostage-taking and other attacks on innocent non-combatants.

* * *

Social and economic conditions in Haiti were still extremely harsh, unemployment was soaring and there was little investment in the country, according to a United Nations spokesman. Under-Secretary-General Chinmaya Gharekhan told the Security Council yesterday that only one third of the United States $1.7 billion aid package pledged last year had actually materialized. Most of what had come in had gone for balance of payments support and debt cancellation.

Meanwhile, Haiti's provisional electoral council has announced that Rene Preval won 87.9 per cent of the popular vote and his runner-up only 2.5 per cent in the country's recent Presidential elections. The United Nations spokesman said 28 per cent of registered voters went to the polls. President-elect Rene Preval has asked that the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) stay another six months with the same mandate.

* * *

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women has discussed ways to implement the Platform for Action adopted at the Beijing Women's Conference. The Committee, which began a three-week session yesterday, monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Experts said the Platform must become a yardstick as new reporting guidelines for States parties to the Convention were introduced.

The Committee also heard reports from Cyprus. Experts said special measures were required to reduce the concentration of women workers in low paying jobs and increase their numbers in decision making positions. Welcoming recent legislative changes in Cypriot law to promote women's equality, the Committee stressed the importance of gender sensitive training for judges and law enforcement officers. It also asked for more information on health care, grounds for divorce, inheritance rights, abortion, the legal age for marriage, violence against women and trafficking in women.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General meets with British Minister on Environment; discusses need to improve environmental programmes world wide.

* Secretary-General estimates cost of UNTAES for initial six months will be approximately $128.5 million.

* Resumed session of Review Conference on Conventional Weapons to focus on technical considerations of land-mines.

* International Police Task Force for Bosnia almost at full strength; to promote confidence among local communities.

* UNHCR announces plans to repatriate 2 million Bosnian refugees and displaced people.

* UNHCR camps for former Vietnamese boat people to be phased out from beginning of July.

* UNFPA pledges support for Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

* IFAD to lend record amount of aid during 1996.

* Poverty witnesses speak of their struggle at ceremony to set "poverty clock" ticking at United Nations Headquarters.

* * *

On his last day in London, before returning to New York tonight, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had a full schedule. He first met with the British Minister of the Environment, John Gummer. They discussed follow-up to the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 and the need to strengthen environmental programmes worldwide, possibly with help from regional organizations. They also addressed the importance of coordination between environmental programmes and related events, such as next June's Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) in

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Istanbul, Turkey.

The Secretary-General then met with the Director of the United Nations Association in the United Kingdom, Malcolm Harper, and Sir David Hannay, currently advisor to the World Federation of United Nations Associations. The Assistant-Secretary-General of the Department of Public Information (DPI), Samir Sanbar, also attended the meeting, which centered on cooperation between DPI and United Nations associations around the world.

Later, the Secretary-General attended a round-table discussion at the Royal Institute for International Affairs on the theme of the United Nations: Agenda and Challenges. The discussion was attended by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, senior foreign office officials, Members of Parliament, writers and university professors.

* * *

It will cost approximately $128.5 million to maintain the United Nations Transitional Administration and Peace-Keeping Force in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) for an initial six months. The amount will cover costs for 5,000 contingent personnel, 600 civilian police, 469 international civilian staff and 681 locally recruited staff.

In a letter to the Security Council issued today, the Secretary-General outlined the estimated costs and recommended that they should be considered an expense of the Organization and that assessments levied on Members be credited to a Special Account.

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Significant progress would be made if delegates emerged with a "fair idea" of how to resolve major technical issues concerning the detectability and deactivation of land-mines, the Review Conference of States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons was told yesterday. Some 44 delegates from 50 States parties, as well as representatives of United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations are participating in this week's session in Geneva, from 15 to 19 January. It will focus on definitions, technical specifications and specific prohibitions on the types and uses of land-mines.

Several speakers said they hoped that the "deadlock" at last year's session in Vienna would be broken, and effective steps taken to close divergent technical and military viewpoints about land-mines. In Vienna, there was general agreement that a strengthened Protocol was needed which should bring about an eventual ban on land-mines. However, negotiations stalled on issues of detectibility and self-destruction of mines, as well as on the amount of lead time allowed for State parties to bring existing stocks into line with new specifications.

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The United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) for Bosnia and Herzegovina has almost reached its full strength of 1,721 officers, a United Nations spokesman said today. More than 25 countries have indicated they will contribute over 1,600 police to the force, which is made up of unarmed police professionals. They aim to promote confidence among local communities by monitoring human rights and training the parties' own law enforcement personnel. Already, 155 officers have been deployed throughout the country, with teams in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Banja Luka, Gorazde, Kladanj and Zivinica.

The Security Council established the IPTF on 21 December 1995 to carry out certain tasks set out in the Dayton peace agreement. The duties include monitoring law enforcement activities and facilities; advising and training law enforcement personnel; assessing threats to public order and advising the Government on how to organize effective law enforcement agencies. Although they will accompany local law enforcement personnel on their duties, IPTF officers will not be responsible for maintaining law and order. The United Nations Coordinator for Bosnia and Herzegovina, who will be stationed in Sarajevo, will oversee the work of the IPTF's Commissioner.

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In a climate of donor cutbacks for development aid, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) plans to lend a record amount of money this year. As its Governing Council opened its 19th session in Rome today, IFAD announced it will lend some $455 million to 32 projects. That is about $40 million more than last year and an increase in real terms of around 5 per cent.

The Fund lends to projects in developing countries which help small farmers increase their food output and income. Its real strength is that about two thirds of the money lent comes from the Fund's own resources, assets and investments. However, that aid is now becoming highly vulnerable.

* * *

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) plans to work with governments to ensure universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by the year 2000. Executive Director Dr. Nafis Sadik, told the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women that the Fund will work with other UN agencies to inform women's non-governmental organizations and human rights advocates of the Committee's work. She said that should help organizations monitor the Convention's implementation at the country level.

Dr. Sadik said UNFPA was committed to human rights, especially women's rights. The right to health and the right of couples and individuals to

determine the number and spacing of their children had been instrumental in driving the Fund's policies.

* * *

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, today announced plans for the return of more than 2 million refugees and displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Details were announced yesterday, at a meeting of Humanitarian Issues Working Group of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Some 40 governments and 20 agencies attended the one-day meeting which also focused on the future of hundreds of thousands of people from the former Yugoslavia being given temporary refugee in several European countries.

Ms. Ogata said that, in many ways, monitoring the peace would be even more challenging than UNHCR's efforts over the last four years to provide one million tons of humanitarian aid in the middle of a brutal war. She warned that the refugees will return only if it is safe and they have something to return to. Under the Dayton peace accords, the UNHCR is responsible for the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will phase out support for Vietnamese boat people. In Bangkok, Thailand this week, an informal meeting of UNHCR's Steering Committee decided that the Vietnamese boat people were not legally refugees. Therefore, the UNHCR should not be responsible for them.

According to a UNHCR spokeswoman, the Agency is very pleased with the findings, which were likely to be endorsed at a formal meeting of the Steering Committee in Geneva 6 and 7 March. As of 1 July, camps for asylum seekers, screened out non-refugees -- the Vietnamese former boat people in South East Asia will be phased out.

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Three people, from Zimbabwe, Bolivia and New York, who are working their way out of poverty came to the United Nations today to tell of the struggle in their communities. They attended a ceremony to start a "poverty clock" ticking in the lobby of the United Nations Headquarters. It has been set up to mark 1996 as the "International Year for the Eradication of Poverty".

The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, James Speth, said that the event was a cause for both alarm and optimism. Alarm, because each day another 67,000 people joined the ranks of the poor -- an estimated 25 million people a year, most from developing countries and 70 per cent of them were female. Optimism because the international community now recognized the urgency of the problem and what must be done to halt the grim trend.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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18 January 1996

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General says international community must launch major initiative to prevent another tragedy in Great Lakes region of Africa and promote dialogue in Burundi.

* Canada will not participate in renewed UNAMIR and will withdraw its contingent; says Security Council has not absorbed lessons from recent peace-keeping operations.

* United Nations on brink of financial collapse because of failure of Members to fulfil obligations; alternative sources of revenue would still be controlled by Member States, UN spokesman says.

* Secretary-General appeals for immediate release of hostages, including UNESCO staff member, being held in Irian Jaya province of Indonesia.

* New UNTAES Administrator is optimistic transition from Serbian occupation to Croatian sovereignty in Eastern Slavonia will be successful; receives assurances from both Croatian and Serbian Presidents.

* WFP raises desperately needed funds to feed millions facing starvation in Democratic People's Republic of Korea; new aid sufficient for only two months.

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It was imperative for the international community to launch a major initiative to prevent another tragedy in the Great Lakes region of Africa and promote dialogue across the entire Burundian political spectrum, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a letter to the Security Council, dated 17 January, the Secretary-General reported on the recent mission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Mrs. Ogata said continued humanitarian aid was essential to help Burundian nationals and foreign refugees affected by more than two years of uninterrupted regional turmoil. If aid was completely suspended because of deteriorating security, then the effects on lives, health, general welfare and population displacements could well lead to a massive emergency which would further destabilize Burundi and the Great Lakes region.

The High Commissioner recommended dispatching an urgent technical mission to examine ways to improve existing security, including the limited deployment of United Nations guards to protect UN personnel and premises. She also recommended expanding the application of the Convention on the Safety and Security of United Nations personnel and Associated Personnel to cover activities in Burundi. There should be closer cooperation between the UN and military observers from the Organization of African States (OAU), so they could liaise between the humanitarian community and the Burundian security forces, she said.

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Canada has decided not to participate in the recently renewed United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) and will withdraw the main body of its contingent and military observers by 2 February. In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 17 January, Canada's Permanent Representative, Robert Fowler, said UNAMIR's new mandate was not viable, given the authorized force structure. Last December, he had pointed out to the Security Council that to reduce UNAMIR's strength by one third, while maintaining its earlier mandate would create false expectations of what the Mission could realistically achieve.

Ambassador Fowler said his Government was concerned that the Security Council had not yet fully absorbed lessons from recent peace-keeping operations. He said Canada's decision to withdraw from UNAMIR should not be construed as lessening its willingness to participate in the search for stability and security in the Great Lakes region of Africa, or its commitment to assist the Rwandan Government to rebuild its devastated country. Canada was committed to improving the way United Nations peace-keeping operations were planned, deployed and conducted.

* * *

The Secretary-General had repeatedly brought the attention of Member States to the very critical financial situation facing the United Nations, a spokesman for the Organization said today. He had encouraged discussion on a number of far-reaching suggestions to alleviate the problem and alternative sources of finance to UN programmes and activities had been recommended by many commissions and study groups over the years. The Secretary-General's recent suggestions in London should be considered against this background and in the context of trying to run an Organization effectively and efficiently when he is denied the resources to do so.

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The spokesman said if Member States agreed to alternative sources of revenue, expenditure would still be totally in their control. The Secretary-General would not suggest any changes in the current financing procedure, which was basic to all inter-governmental organizations, comprised of and controlled by sovereign States. Attention should be focused on the main issue, which was that the United Nations now stood at the brink of financial collapse because of the failure of Member States to fulfil their legal obligations, she said.

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The Secretary-General has called for the immediate release of hostages being held by a group in Irian Jaya province of Indonesia, a United Nations spokesman said today. A staff member from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was among those being held. The hostages were engaged in activities supporting environmental conservation in the region when they were seized and the Secretary-General has appealed for an early and peaceful settlement of the problem, the Spokesman said.

* * *

The United Nations should succeed in helping the transition from Serbian occupation to Croatian sovereignty in Eastern Slavonia, correspondents were told at a Headquarters briefing today. The new Administrator for the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), Jacques Klein (United States) said he had received assurances from both Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic that they were committed to the process. It was in their mutual interest to ensure an economic and peaceful solution, revitalize the region and get on with being part of Europe.

Demilitarization could not take place until UNTAES's military entity was operationally ready to assume command and control of the region, Mr. Klein said. The troop force needed to guarantee security was being put together, with Belgium providing the commander and a headquarters capability. Interaction between the Implementation Force (IFOR) and UNTAES in the region was important as both were part and parcel of the post-Dayton peace process. If one did not work, then neither would the other.

Timing was key, he continued, because on the Croatian side there was a sense of urgency to get on with the process, while the Serbian side wanted moderation to ensure the dignity and civil rights of Serbs native to the region, which UNTAES would guarantee. However, the economy and reconciliation between the two peoples were more important than the military equation. Local Serbs had suffered four years of economic deprivation and there was massive unemployment. They realized their future was in Croatia and wanted the United Nations to facilitate reintegration as Croatian sovereignty was introduced.

Similarly, Croats wanted help to return to the region and re-establish themselves in their former properties. They were already preparing to reintegrate post, telephone, commerce, rail and were willing to invest money. He stressed that the economic process was particularly important, as demilitarization took place and militias needed incentives to disarm.

* * *

The World Food Programme (WFP) today announced it has raised enough funds to keep its operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea running till the end of March. Programme officials said a further $1 million had been denoted by Switzerland and Norway. Despite urgent appeals for aid, only Denmark and Finland had previously contributed $505,000.

The WFP's Executive Director, Catherine Bertini, said that the funds would buy a little time, but much more was needed as several million people were at risk of starvation, including 2.5 million women and children. Programme field workers describe horrendous conditions in flood stricken areas, with old women foraging fields and digging into underground animal burrows for roots and seeds to eat. Significant funding will be needed for WFP's $8.8 million plan to feed 500,000 flood victims for just 90 days. To date, only $1.5 million has been committed.

The operations began after an unprecedented Government appeal for international assistance and they mark the first time United Nations food aid has been sent to the country. The WFP has been given access to remote regions, never visited by international humanitarian agencies, to monitor food distribution.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/2063
19 January 1996

F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council President agrees Secretary-General should send technical mission to assess security for humanitarian agencies in Burundi; 10,000 refugees flee into neighboring Tanzania.

* Secretary-General invites Iraq to discuss Security Council resolution permitting limited sale of oil in exchange for medicine and food.

* Governments fail to reach agreement on restriction of land-mines; will consider proposed compromise text before next round of discussions in April.

* International community lacks will or resources to intervene in support of a failed State; Secretary-General writes on Somalia in eighth volume of DPI's "blue books" series.

* Lebanon asks Security Council to extend UNIFIL mandate for another six months till 31 July.

* High death rate among young women in Paraguay from illegal abortions examined by Anti-Discrimination Committee; also studies report from Iceland.

* * *

There is a great deal of concern among Security Council members on the situation in Burundi, according to its President, Sir John Weston (United Kingdom). Briefing correspondents today, he said that the Council had responded positively to the Secretary-General's 16 January letter, which outlined proposals made by the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadaka Ogato, following her recent visit to Burundi. The proposals included the urgent dispatch of a technical mission to examine existing security for humanitarian agencies and the need for closer cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) military observers who could liaise between Burundi's security forces and the agencies. Mrs. Ogata also recommended expanding application in Burundi of the Convention on the Safety and Security of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

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For information media—not an official record

Ambassador Weston said the Council agreed the Secretary-General should put together a technical security assessment team. There were immediate humanitarian concerns in Burundi and Ms. Ogata had emphasized that if agencies were not able to carry out their work there could be a humanitarian tragedy. However, there were two other dimensions to the problem, namely the need for political dialogue and whether there should be other operational moves to pre-empt or prevent worse things from happening.

The Council would address those two questions following briefings from the Secretary-General and after hearing from former Tanzanian President Julius Nyrere who had been active in trying to reconnect a political dialogue in Burundi. Ambassador Weston said the Council would want to be very clear on objectives, resources and mandates before taking any new steps.

Meanwhile, about 10,000 Rwandan refugees fled into Tanzania last night, following shootings at the Mugano refugee camp in neighboring Burundi, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Federation, which is caring for 150,000 refugees in five camps in Burundi, says it will reassess the security of its staff and resources in the country, following the shooting incident.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has invited Iraq to enter into discussions on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 986 (1995), a United Nations spokesman said today. The resolution permits the sale of $2 million worth of Iraqi oil over six months in exchange for badly-needed food and medicine. A percentage of the oil revenues would replenish the United Nations Compensation Committee Fund in Geneva and help thousands of workers who suffered as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 17 January, Iraq's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Nizar Hamdoon, quotes his Deputy Prime Minister, Tareq Aziz, who says he would be prepared to enter into a dialogue with the Secretary-General provided that no conditions were placed upon Iraq.

* * *

Governments today ended a week-long effort at the United Nations in Geneva to tighten restrictions on land-mines without reaching agreement, according to a United Nations Radio report. James Molander, the Chairman of the Review Conference of States parties to the Convention of the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, told correspondents, that he had presented a compromise text, but there were still very strong rhetorical differences among the 50 States parties to the Convention.

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Mr. Molander said some delegates thought the compromise was too painful in humanitarian terms, too little, too vague and not sufficiently stringent. Others thought that it cost too much in military terms and that humanitarian needs had already been met. However, the compromise text, if applied, would save lives and would have a modest but immediate effect on national stockpiles in a number of countries, he said. The proposed compromise text will be assessed by Governments and negotiated before next April, when the Review Conference will resume discussions.

* * *

At present, the international community does not seem to have the will or the resources to intervene effectively in support of a failed State, according to the Secretary-General. Writing in The United Nations and Somalia, 1992-1996, the eighth volume in the "blue book" series, published by the Department of Public Information, he says the United Nations succeeded in ending the country's war-induced famine. However, the Somalia operation showed the limitations of a combined peace-keeping, peace enforcement and humanitarian mission when the resolve to reconcile political differences is weak.

Despite the circumstances which prevented the operation from carrying out its mandate fully, it curbed the rampant violence and saved countless lives, the Secretary-General writes. However, the situation in Somalia will continue to deteriorate until the parties gain the political will to reach a peaceful solution to their dispute, or until the international community gives itself new instruments to address the phenomenon of a failed State. Above all, Somalia highlighted the urgent need for the international community to consider how it responded when all government systems collapsed and a country ceased functioning as a State.

* * *

Lebanon has asked the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), for a another six months until 31 July. In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 17 January, Permanent Representative Samir Moubarak said that despite satisfactory economic performance and accelerated reconstruction, Israel's occupation of South Lebanon and its continued aggression was a major obstacle to comprehensive national recovery.

In view of the Israel's aggression, and the threat to the peace process, the implementation of resolution 425 (1978) was the only way to stop the violence in southern Lebanon, Ambassador Moubarak said. The Council could help secure peace in the region by demonstrating the inviolability of its resolutions and undertaking long overdue measures to implement resolution 425. He said UNIFIL's support and humanitarian assistance were vital to the civilian population, but were not a substitute for its original mandate under resolution 425, which was

to ensure the withdrawal of Israeli forces and assist the Lebanese Government in re-establishing its legitimate and effective authority in the south of the country.

* * *

The high death rate of young women in Paraguay from illegal abortions was examined this week by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. It is estimated 23 out of every 100 deaths of young women in the country resulted from illegal abortions. Experts called for an assessment of the health impact of illegal abortion laws and requested more information on the number of prosecutions for abortion in Paraguay.

Experts from the 23-member expert Committee, which monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, expressed concern at the incidence of venereal disease among Paraguayan adolescent girls, and urged steps to combat AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Iceland reported that a law making its State Treasury responsible for damage to victims of domestic violence would take effect later this year. The Icelandic Ministry of Justice was studying whether victims of domestic violence ought to receive legal assistance.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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22 January 1996

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General briefs Security Council on upcoming negotiations with Iraq.

* Security Council says Palestinian elections a major step forward in Middle East peace process; Secretary-General describes them as a solid basis for Palestinian self-determination.

* Secretary-General says despite political stalemate in Somalia, all-out civil war averted; urges world community to give UN agencies resources for essential humanitarian work.

* Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women questions Ethiopia on practice of female genital mutilation, which affects 90 per cent of country's women.

* UNICEF's Executive Board begins first regular 1996 session; to discuss future emergency operations and management reform.

* UNCTAD releases handbook on international trade and development statistics.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today briefed the Security Council on his upcoming negotiations with Iraq regarding the implementation of Council resolution 986 (1995) which permits the sale of $2 million of oil over six months in exchange for medicine and food.

The Secretary-General told correspondents that there had been negotiations before, but this time he was more optimistic because Iraq had agreed to negotiate on Resolution 986 which it had not done before.

* * *

The Security Council warmly welcomed the Palestinian elections on Saturday and said they were an important step forward in the Middle East Peace process.

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In a statement by its President, Sir John Weston (United Kingdom), the Council congratulated the Palestinian Authority on the achievement, which reflected on the credit of all concerned. It also noted with satisfaction the conclusion of international observers that the elections were an accurate reflection of the Palestinian electorate's wishes.

The Council said the holding of the elections marked a significant step towards the fulfillment of the Declaration of Principles signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Washington on 13 December 1993. It reiterated its full support for the peace process.

The Secretary-General described the historic elections and widespread voter participation in the Gaza Strip, West Bank and East Jerusalem as an important step towards achieving the Palestinians' legitimate rights and as a solid base for their self-determination. He congratulated PLO chairman Yassir Arafat on his election to the Presidency of the Executive Authority of the Palestine Council and on the election of the Council's 88 members.

The Secretary-General said he hoped the elections would reinforce the parties' commitment to further progress in Middle East peace negotiations, concluding the interim arrangements and reaching agreement on the permanent status issues outlined in the Declaration of Principles. The United Nations would continue to support the peace process in every possible way, particularly through economic and social assistance to the Palestinians.

* * *

Somalia has been dominated by a debilitating political stalemate for almost two years, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report to the Security Council, dated 19 January, he said that although there had been no major progress towards national reconciliation, all-out civil war had been averted. However, there could be no durable peace without broad-based consultations among the Somalis.

The Secretary-General said, for the time being, he would maintain the three-person United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) in Nairobi to expand contacts with all Somali parties and coordinate activities with interested Governments and regional organizations. However, because of the UN's own financial crisis, UNPOS could not respond to requests by many Somali leaders for financial and logistical support for their peace initiatives. Their best hope of attracting international help would be to show signs of concrete progress towards peace and reconciliation.

International assistance in Somalia was essential because of low food production and continued political instability, he said. Even in a worst-case scenario, UN agencies could help prevent another humanitarian crisis, while withdrawing their activities, particularly in the south, would have the opposite

effect. In 1996, needs would be at least as great as the last two years. Priorities were food, agriculture, empowerment of local populations and health care, particularly immunization against diseases such as cholera. Resources and security permitting, agencies planned to continue current programmes and expand rapidly if there was an emergency or acute nutritional problems. The Secretary-General urged the international community to help the agencies and stressed that all Somali parties were responsible for the security of humanitarian workers.

* * *

Experts stressed the importance of education in reversing the traditional practice of genital mutilation which affects 90 per cent of Ethiopian women, at a meeting of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. The 23-member expert Committee, which is holding a three-week session at United Nations Headquarters, monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and was reviewing Ethiopia's compliance with the treaty.

Committee members asked what kind of pressure privileged, educated women had brought on the Ethiopian Government to eradicate the practice of mutilation and whether it was planning to take any measures. They wanted to know if the practice was more prevalent among certain ethnic groups and whether a woman could refuse to go through with it. The experts also called attention to problems of polygamy, lack of basic health care, and the fact that Ethiopian women lost their nationality when they married a foreigner.

* * *

The Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will examine emergency operations and management reform during its first 1996 regular session which begins today at United Nations Headquarters. Other topics will include follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing last September and recommendations for its various country programmes.

The Agency's strategy is shaped by the changing nature of emergencies, new threats to children such as AIDS, and the increased scale and severity of many emergency situations. Last year, UNICEF enhanced its capacity to respond swiftly to emergencies. It set up an Emergency Operations Centre at United Nations Headquarters, created Rapid Response Teams, stockpiled a $3 million in supplies and equipment and hired a specialist in emergency operations and logistics. It also conducted a major review of lessons learned in Rwanda and Somalia.

* * *

Data on world trade, including trade balances, commodity shares, balance of payments, financial flows and exports and imports can be found in the 1994 edition of the Handbook on Trade and Development Statistics just issued by the

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The 511-page handbook gives an integrated treatment of development and related issues and is probably the most comprehensive single volume of detailed analytical data on developing countries and their role in the world economy. Attention has been paid to relevance and ease of interpretation, with the use of regional classifications in some contexts and economic classifications in others, to reveal structural differences between countries.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

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23 January 1996

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- United Nations financial situation precarious and heading for the brink, says Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management.
- Secretary-General says phasing or closing down of MINURSO could destabilize Western Sahara region.
- Secretary-General says "Group of 77" has responsibility to be more responsive to today's needs.
- UNICEF to work with Government to improve care for orphans in China.
- Croatian Government says more than a million of its children exposed to horrors of war.

* * *

The United Nations financial situation was precarious and heading for the brink, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, Joseph Conner said today. He told correspondents, the Organization was now owed $3.3 billion -- $1.6 billion for the regular budget, $1.7 billion for peace-keeping operations and $4.9 million for the International Tribunals. And, overdue amounts had risen each year. The United States cash receipts were very important and its payment shortfall was severe, but it was not alone. By the end of last year, only 94 countries had paid their regular budget contributions in full and 22 had made no payment at all.

On a positive note, the United Nations had brought down a tough 1996-97 budget to achieve a little better than "zero nominal growth", Mr. Conner said. It was a significant accomplishment, as good, if not better, than most national governments were achieving. For the first time, the budget had identified efficiency gains and revenue enhancements to offset inflation and the adverse effects of foreign exchange. However, the cash situation was increasingly negative. The UN had no capital and no cash reserves and was totally dependent on the assessment scheme. The Working Capital Fund and the Special Account had been exhausted and it had been necessary to borrow from peace-keeping operations to fund the regular budget. The day of reckoning was

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now closer, he said.

For the last 10 years, countries' payment of current assessments had slipped and arrears had built up. But despite slow and late payments, the UN could expect to receive cash inflows -- from both arrears and current assessments -- that about equalled the current year's level of assessments. In 1993, regular budget receipts were about 99.7 per cent and in 1994 about 100.6 per cent -- some from arrears and some of it current -- so enough cash came in to keep the regular budget cycle in operation. United States payments in 1993 and 1994 fit that pattern, and its total payment of arrears and current dues almost equalled its assessment for those two years. However, last year, the total fell to 92.7 per cent, because the United States rate of payment dropped. In effect, it paid as if its assessed rate was 12 per cent not 25 per cent. And it was the same for peace-keeping. In 1993 and 1994, the UN received about 90 per cent of its peace-keeping assessments, but in 1995, the figure dropped to 86 per cent, because the United States paid as if its assessment rate was 14 per cent not 31 per cent.

Conservation measures implemented by the Secretary-General in September were a modest attempt to curtail cash needs, while allowing the United Nations to fulfil all its mandates, Mr. Conner continued. They were never meant to overcome a significant, prolonged holdback on countries' regular contributions. The total amount of peace-keeping assessments was expected to be significantly lower in 1996, which would exacerbate the cash flow situation. The current cash forecast was being prepared and waiting input from the 20 largest contributors as to when, and how much, they would pay. That number would be presented to Member States on 5 February.

* * *

The phasing out or closing down of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) could destabilize the region, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report to the Security Council, dated 19 January, he said the identification of applicants eligible to vote in elections on the territory's future status was at a near standstill because of Frente POLISARIO's decision not to participate in the identification of certain groups. Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, who have been involved in a long-running dispute over Western Sahara, agreed, as part of a settlement plan, for an Identification Commission to assess voter eligibility.

However, according to the report, only 7,935 persons had been identified since last September, bringing the total to 60,257. Some 174,000 people still needed to be convoked for identification. The Secretary-General said even if the process resumed immediately and was accelerated, an election in May 1996 was no longer realistic. He emphasized that the stalemate would probably occur again in a few months, if and when the Identification Commission

completed processing applicants, and the problem of finding a formula to deal with the caseload of applicants, which was acceptable to both parties, would arise again.

The Council had two options, the Secretary-General said. It could extend the mandate for four months until 31 May 1996 to allow time for the identification process to resume and an opportunity to test the parties' political will in deed, not just words. He would inform the Council if there was little or no improvement. As a second option, the Council could decide not to extend the mandate, unless outstanding problems were solved by certain dates, and it could prepare for MINURSO's phased withdrawal.

The Secretary-General said his Special Envoy had told both parties of the Council's frustration at breakdowns in the identification process and the lack of a reasonably clear indication of when it might end, and its willingness to contemplate the Mission's withdrawal. The new Chairman of the Identification Commission would address other aspects of the settlement plan, such as the code of conduct, confinement of troops and exchange of prisoners-of-war.

* * *

The "Group of 77" developing countries was responsible for making the United Nations more responsive to today's needs, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a statement to a meeting of the Group, during which the chairmanship was passed from the Philippines to Costa Rica, the Secretary-General urged it to serve as a catalyst for progress, adding that the Group could make every effort more effective in meeting tomorrow's challenge.

The Secretary-General said that for more than three decades the "Group of 77" had pursued the cause of economic development and led the way in establishing norms, standards and goals for international cooperation in development. Today, the effort must be intensified. The challenge of development in all its dimensions included environmental sustainability, social equity, and democratization.

* * *

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has reached agreement with China to start a programme aimed at improving the care of orphans and disabled children living in Chinese welfare institutes. In a statement released today, UNICEF said two interlinked projects had been developed. The first, would identify the orphanages most at risk in 30 provinces, set up staff training to improve the children's care, provide rehabilitation services and establish appropriate management standards and procedures.

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The second project would concentrate heavily on staff training and China's National Training and Rehabilitation Centres would make in-service training a priority. The programme would also develop training curricula, materials and management procedures for the orphanages. UNICEF's programme in China focuses on support for maternal and child health care, education, the supply of clean water and adequate sanitation, and the care of disabled and disadvantaged children.

* * *

Croatia says more than a million children had been exposed to the horrors of war that affected the country. In its initial report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which is meeting in Geneva, Croatia said 20,000 children had been directly exposed to the horrors inflicted by their own parents. The war had turned thousands of children into orphans and forced large numbers to flee from their home regions and live as refugees. The Croatian representative told the Committee the Government would donate more resources to social welfare once it had demobilized 50,000 soldiers from its army.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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DH/2066
24 January 1996

W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council calls on Somali political leaders to return to inclusive negotiations; condemns violence against humanitarian workers.

* Secretary-General prepares for talks with Iraq on "food for oil" formula, as humanitarian agencies report millions of Iraqis at severe nutritional risk.

* Secretary-General recommends extension of UNOMIL mandate until 31 May; says peace process in Liberia at critical juncture.

* United Nations proposes $70.5 million programme to repair environmental damage in countries hosting Rwandan refugees.

* * *

The Security Council today said it was deeply concerned about the absence of any credible progress towards national reconciliation in Somalia. In a statement by its President, Sir John Weston (United Kingdom), the Council called on all Somali political leaders and parties to return to inclusive consultations and negotiations, which would lead to the establishment of a broad-based national government.

The Council urged Somali faction leaders to reject violence and place the interests of the country and people above their personal differences and ambitions. While expressing appreciation for the efforts of various regional organizations and neighboring States to promote dialogue, it said that the Somali people were ultimately responsible for achieving national reconciliation and restoring peace.

The Council condemned the harassment, beatings abductions and killings of international humanitarian personnel in Somalia and underlined that all Somali parties were responsible for ensuring the security of the personnel. The delivery of humanitarian assistance was crucial to overall security and stability, the Council said and called on Somali parties and factions to open Mogadishu's main port and other transportation facilities unconditionally. It

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reminded States of their obligation to fully implement the military embargo against Somalia and called on them to refrain from any actions which might exacerbate the situation. The Council supported the Secretary-General's intention to maintain the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS).

* * *

The Secretary-General will soon propose a date to Iraq for the first round of talks on the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995), according to a United Nations spokesman. The resolution allows Iraq to sell a limited amount of oil -- $1 billion over 90 days -- to purchase badly needed medicine and food. The Secretary-General has reviewed steps with his senior advisors on how to implement the "oil-for-food formula", she said, emphasizing that there would be no "quick fix." Discussions would be incredibly technical and difficult and would take time. There would be no easy solutions.

The Secretary-General was focusing an enormous amount of time and energy on the talks because of the desperate humanitarian situation in Iraq, the spokesman continued. Humanitarian agencies trying to function in the country had reported "alarming food shortages". An entire generation of Iraqi children were being irreparably damaged.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), 4 million people, or one fifth of Iraq's population, including 2.4 million children under five years of age and 600,000 pregnant and nursing mothers, were at severe nutritional risk, the spokesman said. Deaths from malnutrition had increased eight fold since 1989. A sample of children in Baghdad found 28 per cent were stunted and 29 per cent underweight. In hospitals, badly nourished children were dying from colds or bronchitis, she said. A month's supply of food for a family of five cost around $26, when the average monthly wage was $3 to $5 and a university professor earned $9 a month.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) be extended until 31 May. In a report to the Security Council dated 23 January, he said the situation could then be reviewed, keeping in mind that, under the Abuja Agreement, elections were scheduled before the end of August. The Agreement also called for the disengagement of forces by 26 September 1995 and for full disarmament to start on 1 December. However, that schedule underestimated delays to ensuring combatants were ready to participate in the disarmament and demobilization process.

The peace process in Liberia was at a critical juncture and the full support of all concerned was required to overcome recent setbacks, the Secretary-General said. He urged the faction leaders to ensure their forces observed the cease-fire, disengaged without further delay and cooperated with the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring the Observer Group (ECOMOG) and UNOMIL to initiate disarmament and demobilization as soon as possible.

The Secretary-General urged the Liberian National Transitional Government to support those efforts and play an active role to ensure that the Liberian factions cooperated with ECOMOG and UNOMIL. He also called on the international community to provide the necessary resources to enable ECOMOG to carry out its responsibilities effectively, since the continued lack of support could jeopardize implementation of the Abuja Agreement

* * *

The United Nations today proposed a $70.5 million programme to repair damage to the environment and infrastructure in countries hosting Rwandan refugees. The portfolio of projects will involve efforts to stop environmental damage, including an end to unregulated wood-cutting in the refugee camps; reforestation; rehabilitation of roads, ports and communication facilities and sanitation, and poverty alleviation and income generation. The projects are designed to be implemented rapidly and will complement other activities already under way.

The Director of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Regional Bureau for Africa, Kamal Morjane, said he hoped the international community would support the projects which acknowledged the generosity of the asylum countries. The initiative was vital to help repair the ravages of a massive human tragedy which affected the lives of many people, not only in Rwanda, but in neighbouring countries as well, he said. The projects were presented to a technical meeting of donors in Geneva, which was called by the UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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DH/2067
25 January 1996

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General recommends extension of UNIFIL mandate until 31 July; says Force contributes to stability in Lebanon.

* Secretary-General calls for early conclusion of comprehensive test ban treaty as Disarmament Conference begins 1996 session in Geneva.

* European Union proposes package to address United Nations financial crisis; says all Member States must make firm and clear commitment to acquit arrears and pay future contributions promptly and in full.

* Humanitarian crisis mounts in Kabul, Afghanistan, as city is cut off from aid deliveries.

* UNICEF joins international organizations in commemorating 200 years of vaccines.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) be extended for another six months, until 31 July 1996. In a report to the Security Council, dated 22 January, the Secretary-General said that although there had been no progress towards the implementation of UNIFIL's mandate, its contribution to stability in the area and the protection it gave to local inhabitants remained important. UNIFIL was established under Security Council resolution 425 (1978) to ensure the withdrawal of Israeli forces and assist the Lebanese Government in re-establishing its authority in the south of the country. There are 5,146 United Nations peace-keepers stationed in Lebanon.

The situation in Lebanon was essentially unchanged and remained tense and volatile, the Secretary-General said. Israel still occupied parts of the south, where their forces were attacked by resistence groups. During the last six months there had been a decrease in the targeting of civilians and attendant loss of life, and he urged the parties to continue to exercise restraint and end the practice altogether.

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For information media—not an official record

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Contributions to the United Nations regular budget by Member of the European Union would increase after the time of its proposal to address the Organization's financial crisis. The proposals were part of a comprehensive package outlined today by the permanent Representative of Italy, Francesco Paolo Fulci, on behalf of the European Union. The Czech Republic, Poland and Romania, as well as Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, aligned themselves with the statement. He said that no reform would be possible for [illegible] unless all Member States, including those with above world average burden [illegible] would pay more, and above majority would pay less.

The proposals were presented in the Fifth Committee [illegible] to the Financial situation of the United Nations which [illegible] must change its working methods, stop talking and start acting. It must get down to negotiations, because the [illegible] is legitimate to ask. Any solution must be based on a package. As a result of the action it undertakes [illegible] would certainly not solve the present financial problems. The present crisis, notably the gap between ability to pay and arrear contributions, was open to criticism and current misstatements should be eliminated or refuted. He said firm and clear commitment from all Member States to adopt, [illegible] pay future contributions promptly and in full, was an indispensable counterpart to the proposals.

The proposals reaffirmed the traditional methodology of assessment according to "capacity to pay", with special relief for low per capita income countries, and a "premium" for permanent Security Council members to reflect their special responsibility for international peace and security. The result they pursued on the idea of an objective and universally accepted method on a long-term basis for determining full contributions to the regular and peace-keeping budgets. This would lead to a more equitable and transparent scale which would adjust automatically to relevant economic situations and take into account the needs of countries with a low per capita income.

Ambassador Fulci said a system of early payment incentives and penalties would be included. Introduction of [illegible] country accumulates more than two years of arrears, [illegible] above years, application of interest, at the earliest [illegible] lottery of [illegible] with suspension [illegible] and liquidation [illegible] recalculation of their ratings. [illegible] Secretariat should also [illegible] their financial obligations.

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The proliferation of [illegible] and the [illegible] availability of their [illegible] was a major [illegible]

more

security, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a statement to the opening of the Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva this week, he called for a coordinated approach by the international community to the growing threat and urged the 38-member Conference to focus renewed energies on concluding a comprehensive test ban treaty this year.

Several speakers also stressed the urgency of concluding a treaty by June and appealed for the reestablishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. The adoption of a test ban treaty could contribute to global disarmament, help prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and eventually lead to a total ban on all forms nuclear weapons, they said. However, there was much work to do, if a treaty text was to be ready for signature by the General Assembly in September.

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The Humanitarian Affairs coordinator in Afghanistan, Martin Barber has sent disturbing reports on conditions there, a United Nations spokesman said today. The capital has been cut off since 10 January and the World Food Programme (WFP) has not been able to get food shipments into the city. About 60 per cent of Kabaul's 1.2 million people were considered really vulnerable and could not survive without humanitarian aid. The city's population had grown enourmously in last few weeks as displaced persons sought shelter.

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One of the most important breakthroughs in medical history -- the invention of the smallpox vaccine 200 years ago -- was celebrated today at United Nations Headquarters. The bicentenniel commemoration was launched by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization , the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), sponsors of the Task Force for Child Survival and Development.

According to UNICEF, by the end of 1990, immunization of the world's children had risen from 20 per cent to 80 per cent in just six years. Eight out of every ten children were now protected from deadly diseases -- measles, tuberculosis, tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough and polio -- saving 3 million lives each year.

"Wherever children live, vaccines protect them from death, disease and disability", UNICEF Director, Carol Bellamy said. "Today, a child growing up in Malawi can enjoy the same level of protection through immunization as a child living in Switzerland."

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